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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
November 1, 1939

Dear Committeeman:

Early this summer I asked the counties to submit suggestions for the 1940 AAA Program - 407 counties responded and I have read each of the replies. There were 477 different suggestions and I have compiled them into 14 groups. I am sure you will be interested in the attached copy of this compilation which has played a most important part in the formulation of the 1940 AAA Program.

In midsummer the North Central State committeemen, fieldmen, and representatives of the Washington Office held a conference to consider the 1940 Program. A copy of the compilation of suggestions was given each person in attendance and was constantly used as a guide in the adoption of recommendations for the 1940 Program.

Shortly after the Regional Conference two persons from each State attended the National Conference on the 1940 Program. The National Conference outlined a program which has permitted us to include almost all of the more popular suggestions in the 1940 North Central Docket and procedure.

I will discuss briefly the most popular suggestions. 109 counties indicated they want to continue the 1939 Program with a few changes. If we were to assume also that a large portion of those who did not reply did not do so because they had no particular objections to the 1939 Program, it would seem that we have a rather plain mandate to make only those changes which were named by several counties. Since there will be so few changes for 1940, it is my hope that every committeeman will find much more time in 1940 to study the agricultural situation and how the program is designed to meet the needs of our farmers. Through such knowledge we will be able to build still better programs for the future.

The most popular of all suggestions was an increase in soil building allowance. A similar suggestion which was also popular was to increase the general crop payments. With a given appropriation and a given set of factors which are named in the formula in the law for distribution of the appropriation, it would not be possible to make such increase without the transferring of funds from other commodities. The law does permit a limited transfer of such funds and both the soil building allowance and general crop payments for 1940 will be increased because a small part of the payments which would otherwise go to corn and wheat are used to make such an increase. It is doubtful if the growers of corn and wheat would favor such a transfer of funds if parity payments were not available for such crops.



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Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. [Name]:  
I have just received your letter of the 10th and am glad to hear from you. I am sorry that I cannot reply more fully at present, but I will do so as soon as possible.

I am sure that you will find the enclosed material of interest. I have also enclosed a copy of the report on the [Topic] which I have just received.

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In conformity with a popular request no parity payments will be made if the total planting of all the parity payment crops on the farm exceeds the total of the allotments for such crops. Also, in conformity to many requests, there will be a \$20.00 minimum payment and other features which will help the small farmer.

It was indicated that late changes in rulings and procedure are undesirable. We hope our increasing experience will help us avoid such changes except in cases of unforeseen circumstances. I am afraid we have not been able to simplify the regulations and forms as much as you desire. The chief reason is that simplification often means elimination of a popular feature. Of course, few changes mean that there will be less new phases to learn in 1940.

Those of you who have studied the 1940 wheat program realize that we have tried to incorporate the most popular suggestions for the classification of acreage seeded to wheat. The solution of this problem has been difficult because of the variation in utilization of the crop.

In response to many requests, more opportunity for appraisal has been provided in the crop insurance procedure.

We agree that it is desirable to keep the administration of the farm programs in the hands of actual farmers. They are the ones most interested and they have demonstrated their ability to handle their own programs efficiently.

Although many counties asked for longer terms for committeemen, there are many who think it desirable to effect a more rapid turnover in committeemen. After thorough consideration of this and other county organization problems at the regional and national conferences, it was decided to make little change in the county election procedure for 1940.

The majority of the counties referring to combination of farms wished to retain the combination feature with county committee authority to reduce the number of such combinations. We have endeavored to fulfill this desire.

A large number of the county letters referred to the farm allotment procedure. There was considerable variation in these suggestions due to divergence of opinions. We have provided for the most popular request which was to give the local committees more discretion. Equity is most important and is difficult to obtain when there is a great divergence of ideas in the county and between counties. It is important that when there is a departure from the customary procedure for establishing allotments, an adequate written record is made of the reasons for such departure. By such a record uniformity can be measured, interested people can satisfy themselves as to the fairness of the allotments, and better decisions can be made in appeal cases.





The provisions relating to land classification are in line with the more popular suggestions except the one for classifying soybeans for grain as nondepleting. We did not believe such a change was justified either from an economic or agronomic standpoint. As requested, the county committees will be given the right to penalize for permitting the growing of weeds on idle land.

Almost all of the more popular suggestions for soil building practices were adopted for 1940 except a few for orchard practices which did not seem quite in conformity with good standards and actual costs. For 1940 more emphasis will be placed on green manure crops, tree planting, spreading limestone, and grants of aid.

Adoption of the following popular recommendations was prohibited by law: Remove the \$10,000 limitation; make dairy products a special commodity; restore 80 percent rule; provide commercial wheat area; compute county expense deduct rate on basis of maximum farm payment; and give landlord all the payment for field-rented farms.

We are in hearty accord with the expressed desire for more intensive educational activities. I hope that at every meeting time will be taken to discuss local and national agricultural problems and their solutions. Through a better understanding, an unselfish spirit, and untiring effort we will attain a more satisfying rural life.

Sincerely yours,

*Claude R. Wickard*

Claude R. Wickard,  
Director,  
North Central Division.



